



FOOD ASSISTANCE ACTION COMMITTEE

A Federal, State and County Partnership for policy interpretation and review, food stamp outreach, Quality Control and corrective action activities.

MINUTES

DATE: TUESDAY October 27th, 2009

TIME: 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION: California Dept of Social Services
Mammoth Conference Room
2450 Del Paso Rd. Ste. 200
Sacramento, CA 95834**

- 1. Welcome/Housekeeping**
- 2. Review of Previous Minutes –** Following changes were made
 - a. RADEP Report, RADEP does not go off line on Fridays due to the State Furloughs.
 - b. Court Litigation There are no changes to the Sim Pitch (not Kitch)
- 3. RADEP Report – Kim Murdock**
 - *Analyst Name* question has been added as well as case assignment by analyst.
 - 044-047 income type 44 has been changed to 47
 - RADEP has been slow last couple of days due to server change
 - Food Stamp secondary case review –an e-mail was sent out for Questions. 17 Federal cases will be changed over to correct the review month. The sample month will match Issuance month

except there will be a few cases for the prior month. State cases will not change.

- Review months June, July, and August became July, August, September due to effective months.
- June to July 6 cases total: Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Riverside, and Stanislaus.
- July to August 5 cases total: Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, Santa Barbara, and Solano.
- August to September 6 cases total: Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, and San Francisco.

Counties are supposed to use the definitions on the transmittal.

Counties need to comment on draft transmittal by Nov 5th.

Riverside Co. – Daphne asked a question regarding use of EBT
FDRAB is doing research on when they can begin using EBT as the source. FDRAB has no firm time frame for use of EDB and is developing a work plan for this research.

Question was asked if the cases being corrected were only available for sample selection one time in the secondary sample. If not, the universe is incorrect. Moving the review date was not an appropriate solution. Richard asked that the discussion be outside FAAC. No resolution was provided.

4. FS Program Policy Updates

Legislative Update

AB 719 Passed and was signed by the Governor. Foster youth will qualify for a flat benefit amount as emancipated youths for one year following their leaving the FC system. These individuals will have no reporting responsibility. County responsibility will be with the county where Foster Care case was carried. California is requesting demonstration project status. – FNS has not approved yet.

Policy Development

ACL has been signed and sent out 10/27/09 regarding waiving of the Face to Face Interview for certain households.

Restoration of Benefits Waiver - Federal approval for two years was given effective June 2009. However, there has been no state implementation yet established. CDSS is currently trying to compute costs and work with the Consortia. California based their waiver wording on Wisconsin waiver.

Example case discontinued 10/31/09 and HH provided requested verification between 11/1-11/31 case can be restored and benefits prorated without new application being taken.

Quarterly Reporting - CDSS wanted 48 months extension of the QR rules from FNS but only got 6 months. Feds are willing to extend for 18 months if California goes to semi-annual reporting. QR extension ended 9/21/09. The WR advocates wrote a letter to FNS asking that California's waiver be denied as they want to have the six month reporting implemented. California does not want to use federal QR rules which require action on all mid-quarter changes up or down.

Modified Categorical Eligibility-MCE - Counties were surveyed on MCE, most counties have gone up. Hope Rios asked if these cases are subject to the gross and net income test. CDSS Policy is that MCE cases are required to meet gross and net income test. MCE only pertains to resource limits. Verification of liquid resources is a county option.

PICS – Has a new link. An ACIN went out in mid September,

Expedited Services - There is an ACIN regarding ES requirements, screening, verbal informing as well as DFA 285, SAWS1 revisions. Interviews are required for ES. No denial NOA is necessary for ES since it is an entitlement not a notice of eligibility. The ACIN clarifies questions received and also acts as an ES refresher. Timeliness of processing California gives 3 days, FNS gives 7 days to issue ES.

Richard Trujillo agreed to send a copy of the draft to FAAC and also FRAT committee.

Recertification Question - Pending verifications at recertification – do we send a NOA? FRAT believes no as the Recertification ending NOA has already been sent. CDSS is still deciding on the policy.

Restricted accounts - ACIN currently customers may have cash reserves totaling up to a maximum of \$5,000 in one or more restricted accounts. The funds must be retained for purchase of a home, education or training, or starting a small business. CalWORKs just added if a Household is in danger of losing a home

or is homeless these funds can be used. Food Stamps will be aligned with CalWORKs.

CDSS has requested to be included in the demonstration to exempt census income in 2010. All counties agreed their consortia can supply the needed data.

Court Litigation

No updates

Name Change for FS program - CDSS is still working on the food stamp program name change. The options have been narrowed down to 4 names. Focus group testing is being done by marketing research Company. They should have it down to 2 or 3 names to recommend to the department. The names are creative and nothing like Food Stamps. One example is Cal Fan. Vermont has Three Squares Vermont.

5. FS Field Operations Bureau Quality Control Updates

Negative Case Reviews - Richard Trujillo says FOB is focusing on Negative Error Rates. Charts (handouts) were sent out to FAAC members.

- The first chart is a map of California showing percentage of errors distributed through out the state. Green= 8% or less, Yellow= 8% thru 13%, Red= more than 13%.
- The second chart shows number of Negative sample cases – 49% Terminations and 51% Denials.
- The third is a list of Nature codes by percentage – *other* is the largest used.
- The fourth is a list of Element codes of which *other* is the largest. Richard is going to break down *other* to help counties identify issues.

San Bernardino Co – Debbie asked if more edits could be created for element and nature codes to ensure information is coded correctly. Marie from FOB stated often *other* is used when documentation and narration do not match or agree in the case. She also stated that there is limited documentation on ES action or inaction.

Richard asked that this information be taken back to counties so that they can understand the impact to California by the Negative Error Rate. Richard also asked that the FNS Negative Error rate presentation from the Annual FS conference be shared. National Payment Accuracy Work Group-NPAWG FNS team is coming to look

at California negative error rate and going to visit Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties.

QC Error Rates - Actives/Negatives

SAMPLE	California %	National Average
Active Sample	3.79%	4.52%
Negative Sample	13.03%	8.58%

Negatives affect the participation rate. Counties should do Focus reviews on Negatives. An example of something found under the element code other could be case denied because no Social Security Card. Counties need to take this information back to Program/Policy and Staff Development staff. Richard asked that at each FAAC meeting county present best practices used to mitigate negative actions. The tool should be sent to Richard in advance. Lucy will have a presentation of Los Angeles' best practices at the next FAAC meeting in January 2010.

QC Sample Completion Rates

ACTIVE 82.08% through 4/09

QC Policy Updates – Cheryl

A Transmittal for courtesy home visit procedure has been received. When HH moves from one county to another, the new county needs to get involved in the interview. New title is Courtesy Face 2 Face interview procedure. San Bernardino asked how the smaller non-QC counties will handle non-coop situations.

QC Training Request

They are trying to get out to other counties to do FNS 310 training. Santa Clara took QC staff to Los Angeles to sit with FOB. They were able to use SEP funds. Kern Co. asked to receive training after their C-IV conversion in January. There are no other pending requests other than Kern.

Federal Differences/Arbitrations - Marlene

A Federal difference was received a case was sited as correct – no IEVS on file, the county did not do a search of real estate. Section 972 of FNS 310 states QC should do routine checks of real property. If the county does not have to a system to check, it should just be narrated this applies to negative allegation. An IEVS is required.

Timeliness of Applications Processing

Timeliness of Application processing posted on Webpage and advocates are beginning to file lawsuits against counties not processing timely. Counties over 10% will have to do a CA Plan

County Concerns

San Joaquin asked when will the \$50.00 threshold end? There is no FNS information on this.

All states are recommending that it remain at \$50.00.

6. FS Field Operations Bureau Management Evaluation Updates

2009 Schedule of ME Reviews

Jerry Parker stated that all reviews for FFY2009 have been completed. The schedule for FFY2010 was shared.

Priorities have been set for 2010 and are:

- On line applications
- Call Centers
- Expedited Services

Santa Clara asked to have their review dates changed to after the implementation of their Call Centers.

Corrective Action Issues

Jerry indicates that his team will be doing a state corrective action plan for Negatives. This is due to the Feds in November 2009.

SEP Funds - Annie Su

Most counties have used the invoicing system correctly. She will be contacting the counties that still need to turn in information. She is available for any questions on how to submit claims.

It is important to get your requests in as soon as possible.

Solano co. suggested we have our conference earlier in the year to prevent end of year issues with SEP funds.

7. USDA – FNS Federal Updates

Hope said FNS published a report on SNAP re: FS access and timeliness. High performance bonuses were issued to Oregon and Alaska due to the high access acceptance to the program.

California is 49th on the list

There is a memo posted on FNS Website (public) administrative notices on Broad based Categorical Eligibility. To find it scroll to SNAP *What's New* section. The CE terminology has been expanded to include: Broad based, Standard, Expanded, and Narrow.

Broad Based CE has higher income limit 200% brochure to public, Narrow CE limits who gets brochure and income limit is 130%. The chart on-line will walk you through what happens with each version of CE.

6 month rate of timeliness (Jan through June 2009) adds square root variances which puts California at 83%

8. 2010 MEETING SCHEDULE

The meetings will be held the 4th Tuesday of every other month, dates are as follows:

January 26	South
March 23	North
May 25	South
July 27	North
September 28	South

9. 2009 Annual FS Conference

Overall positive comments. Most participants liked the set up and would like to see more line staff participation.

10. 2010 Annual FS Conference committee

Committee members consist of the following:

Kern – Linda
Tulare – Leanne
Los Angeles – Petra
Solano – Nancy
Fresno – Martha
San Bernardino – Debbie
Riverside – Daphne
FOB - Marlene & Annie

They will meet in November to decide locations for 2010 Conference.

A suggestion was made to start preparations in January so that the conference can be held in April or May.